

## THE WIND RIVER BREEZE

MARCH 2008

## BLM RMP REVISION IS ON THE MOVE!

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

THE IMPORTANCE OF AN RMP 2

BLM AND COOPERATING AGENCIES 3

SPOTLIGHT ON A BLM SPECIALIST 4

CONTACT INFORMATION AND ACRONYMS 4

Welcome to the third edition of *The Wind River Breeze*, the official publication for the Lander Field Office's (LFO's) Resource Management Plan (RMP) revision.

The RMP revision will guide the management of Bureau of Land Management (BLM)-administered public lands within the LFO over the next 15 to 20 years and is a major effort for the LFO. *The Wind River Breeze* will keep you updated on the RMP revision process and how you can participate. As the revision progresses, future issues will explore the steps in the revision process in greater depth.

Since the last newsletter, BLM specialists have been working

vigorously on the RMP, collecting data and information from local citizens, organizations, and agencies through recent travel management public meetings and cooperating agency meetings. More information on BLM and cooperating agencies can be found on page 3 of this newsletter.

Over the next year, the BLM will use information obtained through scoping, travel management meetings, and the Management Situation Analysis (MSA) to formulate alternative RMPs. The alternative RMPs will address issues identified during scoping and travel management meetings, as well as management

opportunities identified in the MSA. Once alternatives are developed, the BLM will analyze the impacts of those alternatives in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), select a preferred alternative, and after public comment, determine the proposed RMP revision. Throughout this process, the LFO is eager to receive all public input, both formally and informally.

Information is always available from the LFO website at: [http://www.blm.gov/wy/st/en/info/NEPA/lfdodocs/lander\\_rmp.html](http://www.blm.gov/wy/st/en/info/NEPA/lfdodocs/lander_rmp.html)



## FROM THE LANDER FIELD OFFICE, FIELD MANAGER:

Dear Neighbor,

So many things have changed in the use of the public lands since 1987 when the Lander RMP was adopted. Cell phones, for example, are now seen as health and safety issues instead of a personal luxury item. One of the challenges of the current revision process is to find a way to incorporate new technology needs such as cell phone towers and wind farms while protecting the important non-consumptive uses of the public lands.

The importance of good land use planning was confirmed by a February 14, 2008 decision of the Interior Board of Land Appeals affirming the LFO's denial of an application for a cell tower on Beaver Rim. The LFO had evaluated the cell tower

application for conformity with the 1987 RMP, particularly the protections afforded the visual, cultural, and wildlife values of Beaver Rim. The RMP provided clear guidance for managing those important resource values and the LFO determined that the cell tower application was "incompatible" with the guidance.

As the cell tower decision shows, the RMP revision will guide the management of more than 2.5 million surface acres and 2.7 million acres of federal mineral estate for decades to come. The revision will need to establish appropriate locations for cell phone towers and other "modern day" technologies while protecting those special places on the public lands.

We welcome the participation of all communities and individuals to ensure that we make use of all new information for these public lands and formulate the best possible RMP revision.

Sincerely,  
*Bob Ross*



Beaver Rim  
BLM photo

## THE IMPORTANCE OF AN RMP

Anyone who has an interest in using public lands or resources should be aware of the ongoing BLM planning process. Federal regulations require that all proposed actions on BLM-managed lands conform to an approved RMP.

BLM is also required to manage the public lands for multiple uses in accordance with existing laws and regulations. This means that the BLM must continually balance the needs of a variety of "publics," each with a different view of how the public land should best be managed.

An RMP process is the means by which the BLM examines the range of options available for managing the public lands for the greatest long term benefit to the public.

The RMP takes a broad view of existing and potential uses of the land and makes decisions as to what areas will be available to what uses and what restrictions are needed on certain uses to protect resource values. Key land allocation decisions that come from the planning process include determining which lands:

- Should be open or closed to oil, gas, and geothermal leasing
- Can be open for oil, gas, and geothermal leasing only under specific constraints
- Are suitable for coal leasing
- Should or should not be made available for projects like wind farms, communication sites, and other long term uses
- Might or might not be available for sale or exchange under certain circumstances



Devil's Gate  
BLM photo



Bighorn sheep in the Whiskey Mountain area near Dubois, an existing ACEC specially managed to protect this species.  
BLM photo

- Have resource values so important that they meet the criteria to be designated Areas of Critical Environmental Concern and what type of special management actions would be required to protect resources
- Should be designated as open or closed to off-highway vehicle use

The RMP process requires BLM to review the range of management options needed to address the various demands on public lands and resources. Public input as well as that of local governments and other federal and state agencies is essential to the process.

BLM will be meeting with cooperating agencies (including local governments and other federal and state agencies) for the next several months to develop a range of alternatives that will be presented to the public for formal review and comment. However, public involvement is welcome and encouraged throughout the process.

In addition to contacting the local government representatives who serve as cooperating agency representatives, the public is encouraged to contact the LFO to ask questions and provide their input on how they would like to see their public lands managed.

### The RMP . . .

The revised RMP, referred to as the Lander RMP, is being developed to provide future direction for managing approximately 2.5 million acres of public surface and 2.7 million acres of federal mineral estate in central Wyoming. The planning area includes most of Fremont County, and smaller portions of Natrona, Sweetwater, Carbon, and Hot Springs counties, Wyoming.



## BLM AND COOPERATING AGENCIES

The cooperating agency role derives from the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which calls on federal, state, and local governments to cooperate with the goal of achieving "productive harmony" between humans and their environment.

The Council on Environmental Quality's regulations implementing NEPA allow federal agencies (as lead agencies) to invite tribal, state, and local governments, as well as other federal agencies, to serve as cooperating agencies in the preparation of EISs.

Over the years, the BLM has established many productive cooperating agency relationships under informal policy. Our partners have rendered invaluable assistance to the BLM during planning and managing efforts that cover more than 260 million acres of public land in our Nation. BLM has sought out this relationship with cooperators as a medium for public input.

Cooperators are acting as representatives of the public in this RMP process. Although there are a variety of ways to have your comments and input included in the RMP planning process, open communication between you and your representative is critical. The

cooperators for this RMP include both state and local representatives. You can find a list of some of the local representatives below. Please be sure to contact your representative to ensure your input and comments are included in this RMP.

### Your Local Cooperators

**Bryan Hamilton,**  
Popo Agie Conservation District

**Gayle Hirschberger,**  
Dubois-Crowheart Conservation District

**Cathy Meyer,**  
Lower Wind River Conservation District

**Doug Thompson,**  
Fremont County Commissioner

For a complete list of cooperators, please visit the LFO website at  
[http://www.blm.gov/wy/st/en/info/NEPA/lfdocs/lander\\_rmp.html](http://www.blm.gov/wy/st/en/info/NEPA/lfdocs/lander_rmp.html)

### BLM Planning and Decision Process

*The cooperating agency initiative is an avenue by which the BLM planning and decision process can benefit from the experience and knowledge of, not just other federal and state agencies, but also, tribal and local governments. This helps ensure that local conditions and values are considered in the planning process. There are often significant differences in the mandates and jurisdictions of federal, state, local and tribal governments. The cooperating agency relationship can serve as a forum to discuss those differences and, where possible, seek solutions and reconcile disagreements.*

## THE REVISION TIMELINE:

### The RMP/EIS Timeline

 Opportunities for Public Involvement

Notice of Intent  
published in Federal Register  
February 13, 2007

Scoping Meetings in  
Lander, WY and surrounding areas  
March 19 to 23, 2007

Community Meetings in  
Lander and Dubois, WY  
November 5 to 8, 2007  
January 24, 2008 in Riverton, WY

Develop RMP and Draft EIS  
2007 – 2009  
**WHERE WE ARE NOW**

Release Draft RMP/EIS  
2009

90-day Public Comment Period on  
Draft RMP/EIS  
2009

Prepare Proposed RMP/Final EIS  
2009

Release Proposed RMP/Final EIS  
2010

30-day Protest Period  
2010

Expected Record of Decision  
2010

### BLM's Mission:

*To maintain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.*

### BLM's Vision:

*To enhance the quality of life for all citizens through the balanced stewardship of America's public lands and resources.*

## Spotlight on a BLM Specialist

I am Mike Seawall, the Lander Field Office Law Enforcement Officer. I'm a Wyoming native, and learned at a young age, growing up in Cheyenne, that the outdoors and Wyoming were home to me.

I first worked for the BLM back in 1996 on a cave management project out of Cody. I then started as a law enforcement officer with U.S. Forest Service and quickly saw that natural resource law enforcement is the front line of defense.

I have been with the Lander Field Office since June 2007 and see that travel management, winter closures, and wild horse and herd issues are some of the most important in the Lander area.

I was surprised to learn during the recent travel management meetings how many people were interested in having a designated route system for OHV use. Local concerns centered around the new routes that keep being made. I was interested to see that local citizens didn't want to see any more OHV use at Green Mountain, Government Draw, and in the Wilderness Study Areas. This is great feedback that we can take and use in the development of this RMP.

I take pride in working in the field to further the mission of the agency and ensure proper travel management, public safety, and the continuation of ethical use and enjoyment of our public lands.



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### COMMON ACRONYMS:

BLM: Bureau of Land Management

EIS: Environmental Impact Statement

LFO: Lander Field Office

NEPA: National Environmental Policy Act

MSA: Management Situation Analysis

RMP: Resource Management Plan



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